

10/615,069

REMARKS

Claims 1-17 are pending in this application. Claim 17 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Kidder et al, U.S. Patent No. 5,457,757 ("Kidder"). Claims 1-10 and 13-16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kidder in view of Schnell, U.S. Patent No. 6,685,159 ("Schnell"). Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kidder in view of Schnell, and in further view of Cuda U.S. Patent No. 4,773,723 ("Cuda"). Claim 12 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kidder in view of Schnell, and in further view of Suzuki, JP04-062515 ("Suzaki"). Reconsideration of the rejections is hereby solicited in view of the foregoing amendments and following remarks.

With regard to claim 17, applicant points out that the same claim elements recited in claim 17 are present in claim 1. Therefore, claim 17 has been cancelled herein solely to simplify prosecution by focusing on claim 1.

Claim 1 has been amended to highlight patentable aspects of the present invention that may not have been fully appreciated. The applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to claim 1 renders the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being as being unpatentable over Kidder in view of Schnell moot. Although claim 1 has been rejected as being unpatentable over the combination of Kidder and Schnell, Kidder is the only art cited by the Office Action as rendering claim 1 unpatentable.

Amended claim 1 recites features not taught or suggested by any of the cited prior art. Specifically, amended claim 1 recites a "planar light switch...for selectively coupling portions of [a] light beam to respective coupling ends of ... optical fibers" and "a plurality of optically operated devices for converting received optical signals to corresponding electrical signals, each optically operated device optically coupled to [a] respective illumination end of the optical fiber and responsive to the respective portion of the light beam radiated from the respective illumination end for providing an electrical control signal corresponding to the respective portion of the light beam received by the optically operated

10/615,069

device for controlling a remotely located device in communication with the optically operated device."

Kidder, as applied to claim 1, fails to teach or suggest these features. In contrast to the present invention, Kidder describes a planar light switch selectively coupling light from a light source to respective optic fibers for illuminating switches. See, for example, Kidder, column 4, lines 24-52. Consequently, Kidder teaches away from the present invention because the light coupled to the fibers via the planar light switch of Kidder is only used for illumination, not for operating an optically operated device to control a remotely located device as set forth in claim 1. Accordingly, amended claim 1 is submitted to be patentably distinguishable from Kidder. Therefore, claim 1, and claims 2-12 depending therefrom, are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Claim 13 has been amended to highlight patentable aspects of the present invention that may not have been fully appreciated. The applicants respectfully submit that the amendment to claim 13 renders the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being as being unpatentable over Kidder in view of Schnell moot. Although claim 13 has been rejected as being unpatentable over the combination of Kidder and Schnell, Kidder is the only art cited by the Office Action as rendering claim 13 unpatentable.

Amended claim 13 recites features not taught or suggested by any of the cited prior art. Specifically, amended claim 13 recites "allowing portions of [a] light beam to be transmitted through [a selectively transmissive light] switch onto respective coupling ends of a plurality of optical fibers" and "optically coupling respective illumination ends of the optical fibers to respective optically operated devices for converting received optical signals to corresponding electrical signals so that the portion of the light radiated from the illumination end activates the light activated circuit to generate an electrical control signal corresponding to the portion of the light received by the optically operated device for controlling a remote device in communication with the optically operated device."

Kidder, as applied to claim 13, fails to teach or suggest these features. In contrast to the present invention, Kidder describes a planar light switch

10/615,069

selectively coupling light from a light source to respective optic fibers for illuminating switches. See, for example, Kidder, column 4, lines 24-52. Consequently, Kidder teaches away from the present invention because the light coupled to the fibers via the planar light switch is only used for illumination, not for operating an optically operated device to control a remotely located device as set forth in claim 13. Accordingly, amended claim 13 is submitted to be patentably distinguishable from Kidder. Therefore, claim 13, and claims 14-16 depending therefrom, are believed to be in condition for allowance.

Reconsideration of the application and allowance of claims 1-16 are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,


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CERTIFICATE OF TRANSMISSION

I HEREBY CERTIFY that this Amendment is being FAXED to the U.S. Patent Office at 571-273-8300 (Central Fax Number) on this 3rd day of October, 2005.


W. David Sartor